



Eco-tourism in Viet Nam

National Parks

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General introduction

Viet Nam, a hospitable country, has four beautiful seasons, plentiful ecosystem and natural landscapes. There are now about 31 national parks, 6 world biosphere reserves and dozens of natural protected areas with precious and valuable wood and medicinal plants, marine protected areas with plentiful coral reefs and sea creatures, thousands of bird species, hundreds of animals, among which many species have been recorded in the World Red Book.



With the outstanding features of nature, Viet Nam is an attractive eco-tourism spot and strongly fascinates visitors. On coming to the beautiful eco-tourism sites in the Northern mountainous area, visitors can have a chance to sleep in house on stilts, listen to the babbling of the stream, the singing of the birds, and sightsee the fields and valley covered with green trees. Travelling to Mekong Delta, tourists can gaze with veneration at luxuriant gardens and enjoy the taste of mango, rambutan, orange, longan, madarin, etc. In particular, it is the interlacing river and canal system that forms floating markets on the river, which is one of the most attractive characteristics of the region.

With the community of 54 ethnic groups living peacefully together, Viet Nam is of being great charming to attract you during the visit. These constitute great original potentialities of Vietnamese eco-tourism.



Ba Be National Park

Situated in Ba Be District, Bac Kan Province, Ba Be National Park covers an area of 7,610ha and has 3,000 inhabitants of the Tay, Mong, Dao living there. The national park boasts primeval forest on old limestone range that surrounds pure lakes. The park consists of 1,281 species of plant including 162 families, among which 38 species have so far been recorded in the Red List of The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources-IUCN, 553 species of animals with 27 orders consisting of dozens of rare and endemic species like Great hornbill, *Rhinopithecus avunculus*, *Presbytis francoisi francoisi*...

Ba Be Lake highlights the national park with its outstanding landscape and geological features. The 500ha lake is among 20 largest natural freshwater lakes worldwide. The lake is also home to some 87 species of freshwater fish, of which there are valuable and rare species as Ba Be paramesotriton *deloustali*, *Bagarius yarrelli* sykes, *ca lam xanh*, *ca sinh ga*... In addition to Ba Be Lake, the national park boasts unique and imposing tourist spots namely Puong Grotto, Dau Dang Waterfall, Tien Pond... Ba Be National Park has been recognised as an ASEAN Natural Heritage Site.

Situated on Cat Ba Island, 50km to the east of Hai Phong City, in Northern Viet Nam, Cat Ba National Park now comprises of 15,200ha in total including 9,800ha of mountain area and 5,400ha of marine area.

Many archaeological sites, Ha Long cultural vestiges and the marks of the old Vietnamese were found here. The plant system consists of 620 species including 123 valuable families; the fauna system comprises of 20 species of mammal, 69 species of bird, 20 species of reptile and amphibian, especially *Trachypithecus poliocephalus* (*Vooc dau trang*) living in cliffs. Cat Ba Sea contains 300 species of fish, 500 species of mollusc and crustacean, among which a number of species are used to make valuable handicraft products.

Cat Ba Island was recognised by UNESCO as World Biosphere Reserve on 19 December 2004. Nowadays, Cat Ba still attracts visitors by its pristine beauty and legends of its history and culture.

Cat Ba National Park

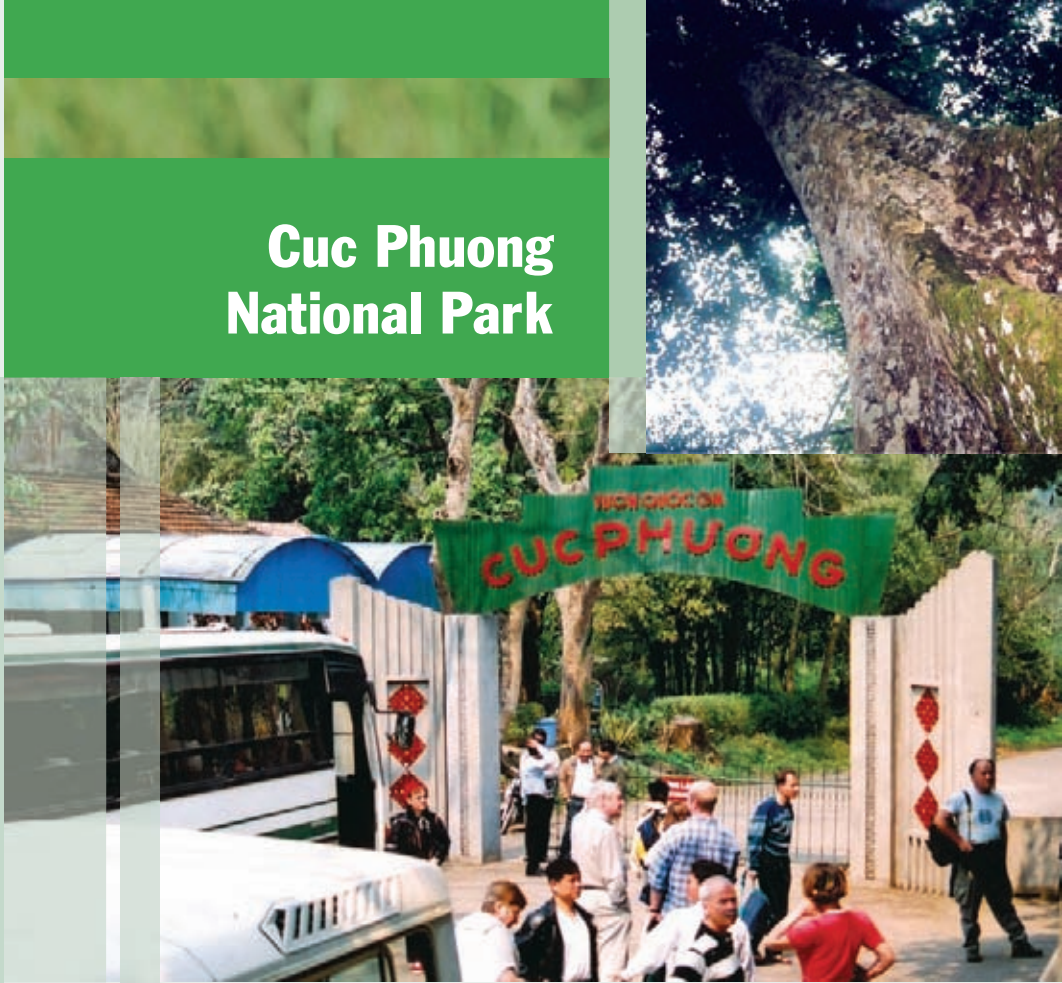


Deeply lied in Tam Diep Mountain Range among three provinces Ninh Binh, Hoa Binh and Thanh Hoa, Cuc Phuong National Park is a well-known and attractive eco-tourism site. Coming here, visitors can escape from the noisy and busy daily life to enjoy the natural surroundings in Cuc Phuong National Park.

Covering an area of 22,200ha, Cuc Phuong is home to a rich and diversified fauna system. That is, high-ranked plant consists of 1,983 species. Fauna system comprises of 110 species of reptile and amphibian, 117 species of animal, 65 species of fish, nearly 2,000 species of insect and the home of 300 species of bird, including many species only found in Viet Nam and Indochina. Belonging to the position of Karst- semi-covering, Cuc Phuong owns many grottoes of prehistoric people, living from 7,500 years - 12,000 years ago.

Coming to Cuc Phuong, tourists is advisable to visit the Muong village possessing unique cultural features such as festivals, customs and community life.

Cuc Phuong National Park



Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park

With the over 200,000ha of parkland in Bo Trach and Minh Hoa districts, Quang Binh Province, Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park is a part of the oldest limestone mountain in Asia with the unique forest type of needle-leaved one growing on the limestone mountain with the height of from 700 to 1,000m.

According to initial statistics, the primitive tropical forest in Phong Nha - Ke Bang houses 2,651 high-ranked species of plant, more than 1,000 species of fauna, including 23 animal species listed in the IUCN Red List. There are 356 bird species, 97 reptile ones, 47 amphibian ones, 270 butterfly ones, 50 water mammal ones. In particular, there are 10 orders of primates, comprising of 50% in total in Viet Nam.

In the area, there are hundreds of caves and grottoes, especially Phong Nha situated at a magnificent range, which was formed for hundreds of millions of years. In addition to the diversity in the ecosystem, Phong Nha - Ke Bang is home to archaeological and historical relics, such as an ancient hieroglyphic script of the Cham ethnic minority, King Ham Nghi's base built for the resistance war against French colonialists in the late 19th century at Ma Rai Mountain...

Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park was recognised as a World Natural Heritage Site by UNESCO in July 2003.





Bach Ma National Park

Located in Phu Loc District, Thua Thien Hue Province, Bach Ma National Park stretches from the East Sea to the mountain range at the border with the Lao PDR.

Among over 22,000ha of forest, there is around 10,000ha of rich one with valuable kinds of wood; 2,147 plant species with 86 species are listed on the Viet Nam Red Book. Until now, scientists have identified 1,493 species including 132 species of mammals (occupy half of all mammals known in Viet Nam), 358 bird species, 31 reptile species, 21 frog species, 57 fish species and 894 insect species.

Coming to Bach Ma, visitors can have chance to enjoy the wild nature with the green trees, Do Quyen, Bach Tri, Bac waterfalls..., which create funny and interesting sounds to the space of the vast forest.

Located 40km west of Buon Ma Thuot City, Yok Don National Park lies in three districts of Ea Sup, Buon Don (Dak Lak Province), and Cu Jut (Dak Nong Province).

With the area of 115,545ha of the vast forests, there are a great number of ecological gardens with a lot of valuable kinds of wood such as Baria dalbergia, Poplar, Red wood, etc. According to the exploration of the scientists, there are now 67 animal species, 196 species of bird, 46 reptile ones, 15 amphibian species, and 100 insect ones, many of which are recorded in the World Red Book such as elephants, chamois, phoenix,... The plant system here is of great variety with 464 species, of which orchid alone consists of 23 kinds with colourful patterns.

Yok Don preserves many outstanding cultural values of Tay Nguyen peoples such as traditional house on stilts architecture with skillful engraving. Visitors can enjoy the space of Gong culture with different kinds of musical instruments such as Chinh K'ram, T'rung...

Yok Don National Park



Marine Protected Area Hon Mun, situated in Nha Trang Bay, Nha Trang City, Khanh Hoa Province consists of some islands called Hon Tre, Hon Mieu, Hon Tam, Hon Mot, Hon Mun, Hon Cau, Hon Vung, Hon Rom, Hon Noc. The area of the marine protected area is estimated 160km², comprising of 38km² land and 122km² water areas surrounding the islands.

According to the research, the marine protected area processes the most plentiful and various coral reefs in Viet Nam with 350 species. It is the position next to the hot sea current line coming from the equator that is the ideal condition for the fast growing of coral reefs and sea creatures with 196 species of fish, 112 species of crustacean, 27 species of pelmatozoa and 69 species of sea weed. The bottom of the sea is the place to make interesting and valuable observation and research of the marine researchers, and visitors who would like to know more about the mysteries of the oceans.

Marine Protected Area Hon Mun



Cat Tien National Park

Situated among three provinces called Dong Nai, Binh Phuoc and Lam Dong, Cat Tien National Park is considered charming natural scenery. With the area of 73,878ha, Cat Tien National Park is surrounded by river system of more than 1,610 high-ranked species of plant, 115 mammal species, 89 reptile species, 168 species of fish, 348 bird species, 450 species of butterfly, and many different kinds of insects of coleopteran and lepidopteran.


Coming to Cat Tien, visitors can experience the feeling of bobbing on *Kazacs*, listen to the bird's songs, observe flocks of pakete sleeping in masses of sedge or flying in the sky, and enjoy other interesting things.

Cat Tien is also valued on cultural and historical features. Archaeologists found relics of Oc Eo ancient culture from the 2nd century to 3rd century A.D. This is the home of the Stieng and Chau Ma people with traditional character customs. The park was recognised the 411th biosphere reserve in the world by UNESCO in November, 2001.





Can Gio Biosphere Reserve



The Can Gio Mangrove Forest is located in Can Gio District; 50km southeast from the center of Ho Chi Minh City, covering the area of 75,740ha.



Thanks to its bio-diversity and environmental values; the Can Gio Mangrove Forest is recognised by UNESCO as the first World Biosphere Reserve in Viet Nam in January 2000. Can Gio is home to 42 plant species including 36 orders and 24 families, 700 aquatic invertebrate fauna species, 137 species of fish, 130 species of bird and 44 terrestrial vertebrate fauna species of which there are 11 species of reptile listed in the Red Book such as *Crocodylus porosus*, Aquatic varanidae, Cobra...

Moreover, this area boasts unique local values with traditional handicraft villages. This is also the first site not only in Viet Nam but also in South East Asia where many valuable relics of Oc Eo ancient culture have been discovered, especially an ancient cemetery with more than 300 jar-graves.

The Mekong Delta is divided into 13 provinces: Long An, Tien Giang, Dong Thap, Vinh Long, Tra Vinh, Can Tho, Hau Giang, Soc Trang, Ben Tre, An Giang, Kien Giang, Bac Lieu and Ca Mau.

The Southwest region of Viet Nam is known for the vast rice fields and the huge plantations that make up the core of this region's economy. The region is also known for the huge amount of fruits such as mango, pomelo, mangosteen, durian, etc.

The most enjoyable things are to sit on a boat and cross the Tien or Hau rivers with 2,5km large or through small irrigation canals covered with luxuriant fruit gardens in the two sides, visit a farm, talk open-heartedly to the host, enjoy the fresh picked up fruits, and fish which has just been caught, and listen to traditional chamber *tai tu* music (amateur music).

In addition to My Thuan Bridge, the longest cable-stayed bridge in South East Asia, it comes as surprise to visitors that the slender bridges across the small irrigation canals to visit markets on the river with hundreds of boats fully filled with products, traders, and noisy sounds.

Mekong Delta



Tram Chim National Park has the total area of over 7,588ha in Tam Nong District, Dong Thap Province. It is designed to preserve the typical submerged in-land eco-system of Dong Thap Muoi (Plain of Reeds). The park boasts a diversified flora which includes some 130 species classified into 6 principle communities. Among them; the “ghost” rice and lotus are considered endemic species of the Plain of Reeds.

With the variety of ecosystems, the park’s fauna is of no less significance housing 55 species of freshwater fish, 185 species of phytoplankton, 93 species of zooplankton and 90 species of zoobenthos. It is also the habitat of 15 species of mammal, 44 species of amphibian reptile, and 198 species of birds, of them 16 are considered rare and endemic species, especially Sarus crane (crane with its distinctive red head and bare neck), an extremely rare species recorded in the Red Book.

Coming to Tram Chim in dry season from December to May, visitors have chance to see the lovely nature from the vivid images of birds flying on the vast mangrove fields. It is easily found Sarus cranes, White egret, Black-headed ibis, Purple heron, Plain-backed sparrow, Lesser adjutant, Bengal florican... In the marsh fully covered with polygonum tomentosum, lotus, water-lily, there are species of Black-crowned night heron, Ruddy-breasted crake, Eurasian marsh harrier, Little grebe, Common teal...

Tram Chim National Park





Phu Quoc National Park

Situated in Kien Giang Province, Phu Quoc National Park covers of 31,422ha accounting for 70% area of Phu Quoc Island, which is regarded as a precious one thanks to the prosperity of natural beauty.

The park's fauna is of great variety of 530 species of plant, 150 species of animals, 365 species of fish, among which a lot of rare animals are listed on Viet Nam Red Book such as Wild wolf, White monkey, etc. Phu Quoc's marine is extremely plentiful with coral reefs in the south of the island. According to the statistics, there are 89 species of hard coral, 19 species of alcyonarian coral, 125 species of fish living in the coral reefs, 132 species of mollusc, 32 species of pelmatozoa, and 62 species of sea weed. Interestingly enough, tortoise-shells come and lay their eggs as well as the rare species of Dugong appear here.

Visiting Phu Quoc, travellers can have chance to go for sightseeing of historical sites; gaze with veneration at beauty spots of streams, forests, caves and grottoes, beaches, coral reefs and mountains, etc., and visit the villages famous for making sauces and know about a special species of Phu Quoc dog.



Con Dao National Park

Photos by: Van Thuc, Nhat Vu, N.Tan, Anh Thu, The Phi, Dao Dung,
Thuy Hang.

Comprising of 16 islands of different sizes in Ba Ria – Vung Tau Province, Con Dao National Park is one of two national parks in Viet Nam owing both forest and marine protected area.

The park has the total area of around 15,043ha, including 9,000ha marine and 6,043ha forest. Forests in Con Dao are mainly proteozic, belonging to the tropical island ecosystem with 882 species of fauna, nearly 150 species of animal, among which there are some rare species only found in Con Dao such as Con Dao black squirrel, winged house gecko, and some species of birds just existing in Con Dao like Masked booby, Red-billed tropicbird, Nicba pigeon and Rock pigeon.

Con Dao has various marine ecosystems with 285 species of hard coral, 84 species of sea weed, 202 species of fish, 153 species of mollusc, etc. What is more, aquiherbosa ecosystem, geophyte in sea estimate about 200ha, comprising of 9 species among 16 ones in the world. Con Dao's sea is a home of tortoise-shell, turtle, Black whale, and especially Dugong, one of the extremely rare species in the world.

Coming to Con Dao, tourists is sure to have comfortable and relaxing holidays deeply sunk in wild nature and experience rare species in the world surviving in Con Dao National Park, and visit valuable historic vestiges.

Several Typical National Parks and Protected Areas for Developing Eco-tourism

NATIONAL PARKS

1. Hoang Lien (Lao Cai)
2. Ba Be (Bac Kan)
3. Hung Temple (Phu Tho)
4. Cat Ba (Hai Phong)
5. Bai Tu Long (Quang Ninh)
6. Tam Dao (Vinh Phuc)
7. Ba Vi (Ha Tay)
8. Cuc Phuong (Ninh Binh)
9. Xuan Thuy (Nam Dinh)
10. Ben En (Thanh Hoa)
11. Pu Mat (Nghe An)
12. Vu Quang (Ha Tinh)
13. Phong Nha - Ke Bang (Quang Binh)
14. Bach Ma (Thua Thien - Hue)
15. Chua Mountain (Ninh Thuan)
16. Chu Mom Ray (Kon Tum)
17. Yok Don (Dak Lak)
18. Chu Yang Sin (Dak Lak)
19. Kon Ka Kinh (Gia Lai)
20. Bi Doup - Ba Mountain (Lam Dong)

21. Cat Tien (Dong Nai)
22. U Minh Thuong (Kien Giang)
23. U Minh Ha (Ca Mau)
24. Tram Chim (Dong Thap)
25. Mui Ca Mau (Ca Mau)
26. Phu Quoc (Kien Giang)
27. Con Dao (Ba Ria - Vung Tau)

PROTECTED AREAS

1. Van Long (Ninh Binh)
2. Ba Na - Chua Mountain (Da Nang)
3. Son Tra Island (Da Nang)
4. Cu Lao Cham Marine Protected Area (Quang Nam)
5. Krong Trai (Phu Yen)
6. Bien Lac - Ong Mountain (Binh Thuan)
7. Kon Chu Rang (Gia Lai)
8. Ngoc Linh (Kon Tum)
9. Lak Lake (Dak Lak)
10. Hon Mun Marine Protected Area (Khanh Hoa)
11. Binh Chau - Phuoc Bui (Ba Ria - Vung Tau)
12. Can Gio Mangrove Forest (Ho Chi Minh City)

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